**Ennui** (French, from Lat. *in odio esse*, to be object of hate) is an

existential form of boredom, a weary state of constant disaffectedness

with oneself and the world, associated with a profound loss of

meaning. In itself an utterly destructive form of indifference, ennui’s intimate bond to poetic and artistic production has often been stressed. Philosophers such as Kierkegaard, Schopenhauer, or Heidegger came to understand profound boredom as an entry point into metaphysical reflection, and twentieth century critics have pointed out its inherent critical impulse. While closely related to older concepts such as Roman *horror loci* and *taedium vitae*, Christian *acedia*, or Greek and Renaissance *melancholy*, ennui is widely regarded as a specifically modern malaise. Omnipresent in 18th-, but especially 19th- and early 20th-Century literature and philosophy, it might have found its most exemplary expression in Baudelaire’s *Fleurs du Mal*. The ubiquity of ennui in modernity has been explained with regard to the process of secularization, rationalization, urbanization and industrialization, as well as with reference to the modern subject’s yearning for self-realization, which is defeated by ennui*.* Historically, ennui has been regarded as a metaphysically dignified form of (mundane) boredom, yet critical studies in the history of boredom have complicated this distinction.

**References and Further Readings**:

Elizabeth S. Goodstein (2005) *Experience without Qualities: Boredom and Modernity*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.